
*An Account of the Events produced in England by
the Grant of the Kingdom of Sicily to Prince Ed-
mund, Second Son of King Henry the Third. With
some Remarks upon the Seal of that Prince.*

TO GUSTAVUS BRANDER, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING purchased the curious Gold Seal of Prince Edmund, second son of King Henry the Third, as king of Sicily [a], in compliance with your request I have made some enquiry into the events produced in England by the grant of the kingdom of Sicily to that prince, and shall submit to you some remarks upon the Seal itself; which I desire you will be pleased to lay before the Society of Antiquaries.

THE grant of the kingdom of Sicily by Pope Innocent the Fourth to Prince Edmund, will be found upon enquiry to

[a] This Seal is mentioned by Speed and Sandford; was formerly in the collection of Edward earl of Oxford; and afterwards in that of James West, esq. It weighs eight penny-weights.

have produced the greatest events in their consequences, that ever appeared in the annals of England. Amongst others, the association of the barons against king Henry the Third; the appointing conservators of the peace in the several counties; and the settling the democratical part of our constitution upon a permanent basis, by Simon Montfort, earl of Leicester, whilst the king was his prisoner.

As the king's wars with his barons have not been generally attributed to his connections with Sicily, and foreign historians being almost silent upon this head [b], I flatter myself that an account of this transaction may be acceptable to the Society.

THE emperor Frederick, who died in 1250, by his will shared his kingdoms amongst his children. He gave the Isle of Sicily to his son Henry, whom he had by his third wife Isabella of England, sister to king Henry the Third. But the emperor Conrad the Fourth, his successor, being at war with Pope Innocent the Fourth, that Pontiff attempted to seize upon Sicily: and, apprehending that this attempt might be attended with great expence, he endeavoured to persuade Richard earl of Cornwall, third brother to king Henry the Third, to accept of the crown of Sicily; flattering himself, that the earl's immense wealth would enable him to support his military operations: but Richard, being a prince of great oeconomy, declined the offer. The Pope afterwards offered the crown of the Two Sicilies to king Henry the Third, who refused the present; being unwilling to deprive his nephew Henry of his kingdom. However, Conrad, having put his brother Henry to death, and

[b] Rapin says, " Among the many Historians of Naples and Sicily whom I have read, I find but one that mentions, en passant, the grant made by the Pope to a son of the king of England; and the author is mistaken in the name of the prince."

made himself master of Sicily, was in the year 1253 poisoned, as is supposed, by his bastard-brother Manfred who usurped the throne of that kingdom. Hereupon Pope Innocent the IVth, improving the opportunity, made himself master of Naples; but Conradine, the son of the late emperor, continuing the war, the Pope found himself unable to maintain the army which he had sent to Naples. In this exigency he applied once more to the king of England, and offered him the crown of Sicily for his second son Edmund; observing, that as his nephew Henry was dead, there was no further room for his scruples.

HENRY was weak enough to accept the offer, and not only sent the Pope all the money which he could borrow or extort from his subjects, but was also so indiscreet, as to engage for the payment of all the sums which the Pope might borrow for the placing Prince Edmund upon the throne of Sicily. The Pope, the better to carry on his designs, and to amuse and please the king, who was become exceedingly fond of this Sicilian connection, sent over into England Albert his notary, with instructions to grant the kingdom of Sicily to Prince Edmund and his heirs [c].

THE Pontiff, finding that Henry was so compleatly fallen into his snare, spared not the king's purse, and drew away his money so fast, that his ordinary revenue could not possibly answer the expence. This put him upon various methods of obtaining money from his people, which rendered him ex-

[c] The notary executed his instructions by an Act dated Prid. Non. March, 1254; and, upon the 2d of the ides of May following, his Holiness issued two Bulls; the one empowering the archbishop of Canterbury to borrow money for the service of Sicily; and the other confirming the notary's grant of the kingdom to Prince Edmund. Rymer's Foed. vol. I. p. 502. 512.

ceedingly

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ceedingly odious to them; but he was so infatuated with the hopes of acquiring a kingdom for his son, that he disregarded their complaints. Notwithstanding Pope Innocent was very sensible that it was out of the king's power to perform his engagements, he assisted him with his apostolical authority in borrowing and squeezing money from the clergy as well as from the laity; and when Henry was unable to satisfy his demands, the Pope threatened to give the crown of Sicily to some other prince [d]; but, his forces being defeated by those of Manfred between Troya and Foggia in the year 1254, he soon after died, as it is said, of vexation. His successor Alexander the Fourth, at a great expence carried on the war against Manfred, who, having defeated the forces of his Holiness near Nocera, was crowned king of the Two Sicilies.

POPE Alexander practised the same arts as his predecessor upon the king of England, who, being ignorant of what had happened in Italy, was made the dupe of this designing Pontiff. And he, the better to conceal his intended impositions upon Henry, sent the bishop of Bononia to London with a bull, confirming his predecessor's grant of the kingdom of Sicily to Prince Edmund, upon the following conditions [e], viz.

THAT Edmund should perform liege homage to the Pope.

THAT Sicily should be no longer divided; but that the two parts should be under the government of one and the same king.

THAT the king should make the Pope every year an acknowledgement of two thousand ounces of *pure gold*.

[d] Rymer's Foed. vol. I. p. 535.

[e] The original instrument is still extant in the Cottonian Library, Cleopatra E. I. and is printed by Rymer in the Foedera, vol. I. p. 893. The title is in these words, "Conditiones sub quibus regnum Siciliae conceditur Edmundo filio Henrici regis."

THAT

THAT he should send three hundred horse for three months to serve the church in case of need.

THAT the churches of Sicily should enjoy their liberties, and that the Pope should quietly possess his rights to those churches.

THAT Edmund and his successors, when they paid their homage, should swear that they should never consent to be chosen emperors, on pain of losing their crown, and being excommunicated.

THAT the church should keep possession of the Duchy of Benevento.

THAT Edmund, when he came to the age of fifteen, should perform his homage in person; and until then the king his father should pay it for him. (The form of the homage is inserted in the instrument.)

THAT it should be at the Pope's choice, whether he would have homage paid him by Edmund and his successors in person or by proxy. And,

THAT Edmund should confirm and maintain the grants made by his predecessors to the family of *Hoemburch*.

BESIDES the above conditions, there were many other conventions and instruments for putting Edmund into possession of the kingdom; several of which may be found in the *Foedera*; and many more are extant upon the Patent, Clause, and Charter Rolls.

ABOUT the end of October, 1255, the ceremony of investiture was performed at London by the bishop of Bononia, in the presence of the king and a numerous assembly of great men, by the symbol of a ring which the Pope had sent for that purpose. The poor king wept for joy at this ceremony, and sent the Pope immediately afterwards fifty thousand marks,
and

and bound himself to send two hundred thousand more within a stated time; upon which account, the Pope granted the king the tenths of the revenues of the clergy.

ALTHOUGH the king's flatterers congratulated him upon this augmentation of glory, there were wiser people who were grieved to see their sovereign so great a dupe to the Pope; and perceived that all the ready-money in the kingdom, was not sufficient to bring about the undertaking in which he was embarked. In short, this Sicilian connection was become exceedingly unpopular, and the business grew more and more alarming. However, Henry being pressed by the Pope, was obliged to call a Parliament, for supplies [*f*]; and he, to avoid opposition, omitted sending writs to the refractory barons. In this parliament, the king introduced his son clothed in the Apulian habit, and made a speech, wherein he demanded large supplies for placing him upon the throne of Sicily; but the barons, being sensible of the ridiculous cheat imposed by the Pope, determined not to lavish the treasure of the kingdom upon such a chimerical project, absolutely refused to comply with the king's demands; and assigned the following reasons for their refusal:

1. THE great distance of that kingdom from England.
2. THE difficulties of securing a free passage through the territories of powers at enmity with the king of England, and perhaps favourers of his adversary.
3. MANFRED's being in possession of Labor (*Laboris*) and other places through which the communication between the several parts of the kingdom is usually carried on.

[*f*] This Parliament met in the chapter-house at Westminster on Friday before Midlent Sunday, A. D. 1256. The writ of summons is preserved in the Annals of Burton, p. 371. and is eight years before the first given by Sir William Dugdale.

4. THE

4. THE strength of the prince (Manfred) in the kingdom.
5. THE alliance actually subsisting between that prince, the natives of Apulia, and the inhabitants of the adjacent countries.
6. MANFRED's being in possession of most of the cities, castles, and fortresses, of the kingdom.
7. THE great riches which that prince daily received from thence.
8. THE immense expence already incurred by the king without any advantages gained in return.
9. THE excessive sums requisite for discharging the debts then due, as also for defraying the expences of prince Edmund's journey, and settling him in quiet possession of the kingdom; all which would amount to more money than the whole kingdom of England could produce.
10. THE destruction and impoverishment of England, which must be the consequence of the several and frequent iters or circuits of the justices, and of a variety of extortions, seizures, and other oppressions.
11. THE scantiness of the king's and his son's treasure, and the poverty of the English as well clergy as laity.
12. THE troubles prevailing in Gascony, Ireland, and Scotland.
13. THE hostile invasion of England by the Welch, in order to drive out the natives by force of arms.
14. THE diminution of the power of England in respect to its counsellors, wealth, and people, which the departure of the earl of Cornwall must occasion.
15. THE encouragement it would give to the king of France, and other neighbouring princes, but more especially to such as formerly possessed lands in England, to attack that kingdom, so soon as the affairs of Sicily had drained it of men, counsellors, arms, and money.

16. THE resolutions they had taken not only to refuse giving their assent to the king's taking upon himself the burthen of this business, lest it should be surmised that they consented to his being betrayed or delivered into the hands of his enemies; but totally to decline being concerned in the business aforesaid jointly with the king; and that as well for the before-mentioned reasons, as on account of the immoderate and uncertain expence wherewith it must be attended, and which could not be raised.

LASTLY, The difficult and heavy terms required in case the business should be undertaken, and which might occasion the king's loss of his right to that kingdom after infinite trouble and expence in order to obtain it.

IN this extremity the King and the Pope united in oppressing the people; the king issued a proclamation commanding all that were worth 15*l. per annum* in Land to take the the order of knighthood, or to pay a certain sum[g], he also took a tallage of 500 marks from the citizens of London, and his Holiness sent Rustand his legate into England to extort money; for which purpose he summoned an assembly of the bishops and abbots, whom he acquainted with the Pope's and the King's pleasure. The demands of the legate were so exorbitant, that they were received by the assembly with the greatest surprize and indignation. The bishop of Worcester declared roundly, that he would lose his life rather than comply. The bishop of London said, that if the mitre was taken off his head, he would clap on a helmet in its place. The legate was no less violent; and, in the end, the bishops

[g] In the month of October the king amerced every Sheriff in England 5 marks, for omitting to collect the knighthood money as directed by his proclamation, M. Paris, p. 804. This knighthood money was often exacted by our kings, and was not abrogated till 16 Car. I.

and abbots being threatened with excommunication, were obliged to submit. It seems, however, that some of the prelates did not comply with the Pope's demands; for, on the 10th of the kalends of October, 1256, he issued a bull, whereby he excommunicated all the prelates who had not paid their tenths [b]. Nor did his Holiness stop here; for he borrowed, from several Italian merchants, in king Henry's name, 135,540 marks; and, to discharge these debts, he caused obligatory notes to be drawn upon the bishops and abbots in England, which they at first refused to pay, but after several struggles, they agreed to repay these sums and by a bull, dated the 5th of the Kalends of October, 1256. he ordered a subsidy to be levied upon the clergy of Scotland for the payment of the debt contracted by king Henry for the affairs of Sicily [i].

UPON the 20th of the Nones of October, the Pope issued a Bull, allowing the king six months time for the payment of the debt to him; and ordered the king to send an army into Sicily upon pain of excommunication and interdict [k]. In short, the demands of the Pope were insatiable, and he pressed the king continually to send him money and troops to Italy; both of which, the Parliament, convened for that purpose, absolutely refused [l]; and returned for answer to the king's demands, that he had unadvisedly accepted the kingdom of Sicily from the Pope without the counsel of his nobles, despising their deliberation and wisdom; that he ought to have been instructed by the example of his brother, who

[b] Rymer's Foed. vol. I. p. 607.

[i] Ibid. p. 608. On the 15th of February, 1256, the king prohibited all his Ecclesiastical subjects from going to Rome before they had taken an oath that they would not solicit against the king in the affairs of Sicily.

[k] Rymer's Foed. vol. I. p. 611.

[l] This parliament met at London 1258, and sat till the Sunday after Ascension-day, when it was adjourned to Oxford.

had rejected the offer; that many difficulties would attend the conquest of a country at so great a distance from England; that the sincerity of the Pope was much to be doubted; that the Apulians were a most treacherous people, who poisoned their relations; and concluded by declaring, that they neither could nor would longer bear with such extortions and oppressions. At length the king adjourned the Parliament to Oxford; and agreed, that the government should be reformed and put into the hands of twenty-four commissioners, who formed the six famous articles, called the Provisions or Statutes of Oxford. The barons, before they broke up, agreed upon an oath of association, whereby they obliged themselves to maintain these provisions with their lives and fortunes; and the city of London soon afterwards entered into the association. The king, being deprived of great part of his power by these Provisions, was absolved by Pope Urban the Fourth from his oath which he had taken to observe these Statutes[m]; whereupon he declared to the Parliament at London, that he would not be longer bound by them. He took possession of the Tower, and dismissed by proclamation all the officers who had been appointed by the twenty-four commissioners, and nominated others in their room. The barons, after several fruitless attempts for an accommodation, had recourse to arms. The earl of Leicester, who was at the head of the confederates, having taken the king prisoner at the battle of Lewes, obliged him to issue such mandates as he thought proper[n]. All the officers of the crown and of the household were named by the earl; and the whole authority, as well as arms,

[m] Vide Orig. in Bibl. Cotton. Cleopatra E. 1.

[n] About this time Pope Urban the Fourth appointed for his legate in England, Guido, Cardinal of St. Sabine, who, being arrived at Paris, was menaced with

arms, of the state, were lodged in his hands. He instituted in each county officers, to whom were given the title of conservators of the peace, and invested them with new and arbitrary powers [o]. In the body of each commission appointing the conservators of the peace, there was a precept to every of them, to send four knights of each county, to be chosen by the assent of that county, *for the whole county*, to meet the king at London upon the Octaves of the Holy Trinity then next ensuing. These commissions bear date the 4th of June, 48 Henry III. A. D. 1258. The Parliament met accordingly, and approved of the new plan of government formed by the barons.

LEICESTER, being in the zenith of his power, caused writs to be issued in the king's name, for a new Parliament to meet at London on the Octaves of St. Hilary. To this Parliament only twenty-three of the temporal barons which were of his party, and a great number of Ecclesiastics, who were devoted to his interest, were summoned [p]; and, the better to encrease and turn to advantage his popularity, he caused general writs to be sent to the sheriff of each county, to return two Knights for each shire, and for each borough two Burgeesses, to sit in Parliament.

It has been asserted by Dr. Brady, Mr. Hume, Mr. Whitaker, and others, that this was the first time that the cities and boroughs sent deputies to represent them in Parliament; which

with death by Leicester if he set his foot within the kingdom; however, the legate advanced as far as Bologna, where he manifested his resentment against the Earl and his adherents; but, not thinking it safe to trust his person in England, he returned to Rome, where he was soon after elected Pope by the name of Clement the Fourth.

[o] One of these commissions is printed in Brady's Appendix, vol. I. N^o 210.

[p] Their names appear in Dugdale's Summons to Parliament, p. 1. and 2.

opinions have been controverted by Mr. Petit, Mr. Tyrrel, Mr. Hody, and the late lord Lyttelton. But, without entering into this contest, it may be remarked, that, since the time of the earl of Leicester's administration, the right of the Commons to sit in Parliament hath never been questioned; although the Commons were not regularly summoned to Parliament for many years afterwards.

It may not be improper to observe, that Pope Urban the Fourth, by his Bull dated 5 kal. Aug. 1263, revoked the Grant of Sicily to prince Edmund; and his successor, Pope Clement the Fourth, granted the same to Charles of Anjou, brother to St. Lewis king of France. Upon the 6th of June, 1265, the king, whilst he was in Leicester's power, issued a commission to several persons therein named, to renounce the kingdom of Sicily in the name and on the behalf of him and his son Edmund [9]; and Leicester afterwards caused that renunciation to be notified to the Pope by a letter from the king. Indeed, that earl was obliged in honour to take these steps, as he and several of his adherents had bound themselves by an oath not to make peace with the king until he had renounced his pretensions to the kingdom of Sicily. But prince Edmund had ample amends for the loss of that kingdom; for, upon the 4th of August, 1265, his brother Prince Edward, having defeated Leicester and his adherents at the battle of Evesham, the immense estates of that earl, together with those of Robert Ferrers, earl of Derby, John of Monmouth, and others, were given to prince Edmund, who was created earl of Lancaster, Leicester, Derby, and Campaigne. These vast possessions laid the foundation of the future greatness of the House of Lancaster; the power and influence of which increased to such a height, that Henry of Bolingbrook, being

[9] Rymer, vol. I. p. 815.

too powerful for a subject, deposed his cousin-german king Richard II, and mounted the throne of this kingdom. And thus, in the person of prince Edmund, were originally founded the great contentions which long subsisted between the two Houses of York and Lancaster.

WITH respect to the Seal of prince Edmund as king of Sicily, I find, that upon the 8th of the kalends of June, 1254, Pope Innocent the Fourth issued his Bull, authorizing this prince to fabricate a Royal Seal for the affairs of the kingdom of Sicily [r]. Edmund, in his letter to the Sicilians concerning his reception, seems to allude to a particular Seal which was known to them. The letter is printed in the *Foedera* [s], and concludes in these words. "In cujus rei testimonium presentem literam AUREA BULLA NOSTRA fecimus consignari. Dat. apud Windes. 13 kal. April. A. D. 1261."

De Magno Sigillo fabricando pro Regno Siciliae.

[r] "INNOCENTIUS Episcopus, servus servorum Dei, carissimo in Christo filio Regi Angliae illustri, salutem & apostolicam benedictionem. Ut eo simus, quod tibi sit cordi, negotium quod in persona carissimi in Christo filii nostri Edmundi, Regis Siciliae illustris, natu tui, assumpsisse dinosceris, certiores quod idem rex, assumptae dignitatis fastigio, reddiderit de tuo bene placito se insignem; desideramus & volumus regalem magnificentiam attente rogantes, quatinus protinus jubeas, quod idem rex statim *sigillum regium faciens fabricari*, nobis infra Festum Beati Michaelis proximo venturum, quod assumpto negotio expresse consentit, significet suis patentibus litteris regiis bulla aurea communitis; tuque similiter infra eundem terminum super hoc, & quod id de tua voluntate procedit mittas nobis tuas patentes litteras in quibus nomines ipsum regem. Dat. Asisii octavo kal. Junii Pontificatus nostri anno undecimo."

Vide Rymer Foed. vol. I. p. 513.

[s] Vol. I. p. 720.

It was customary for princes to make use of Seals of Gold upon extraordinary occasions; several of which are now remaining in the Chapter-house at Westminster [1]. Some of these are of solid gold perforated with holes to admit the strings or labels by which they are appendant; and some, like the present, are composed of two lamina of gold laid upon wax, and closed on the edge, so as to appear like a piece of solid metal.

UPON the obverse of this Seal, the prince is seated upon a throne, holding a sceptre in his right hand, and in his left an orb surmounted by a cross; the legend,

“Eadmundus Dei gratia Sicilie Rex.”

UPON the reverse is a shield charged with the arms of England, and the following legend,

“Eadmundus natus Regis Anglie illustris.”

It may at first sight seem singular, that Prince Edmund should assume the royal arms of England, without any mark of cadency thereon, in the life-time of his father; but, when it is considered, that this was a royal Seal fabricated for him as sovereign of a kingdom wherein his father had no jurisdiction, the propriety of omitting the label will be obvious; which mark of distinction he observed when he sealed as a subject of England. There are in the duchy office, and in the college of arms, several charters of this prince as earl of Lancaster, Leicester, Derby, and lord of Monmouth. I have also a grant of prince Edmund in my collection, to which is appendant a Seal, having the following legend, “Edmundus Filius Regis Anglie Dñs Monemute.” The Seals appendant to the charters above alluded to are of green wax, each having an Escutcheon

[1] Several of these Seals are of exquisite workmanship. Some of them are engraved in the Foedera.

of the Arms of England, with a label of three points. It was not until about this period of time that this kind of Heraldic distinction was used.

THERE is in the possession of Thomas Barrett of Canterbury, esq; a piece of gold [*u*] weighing fourteen pennyweights and twenty-two grains, impressed from the matrix of, or cast from, my Seal, which seems by the form of the letters upon it, as well as from the workmanship, to have been made in England.

AN ingenious member of this Society [*w*], supposes Mr. Barrett's piece to have been a coin struck by the authority of prince Edmund, and that the same ought to be placed in the series of our English gold Coins, and must have been intended to have been current here as his money, and serves to fill up that gap in our gold cabinets which intervenes between the reign of William the Conqueror, and the 41st of king Henry the Third. But, with all possible deference to his judgement, I beg leave to differ with him in opinion upon this occasion, for the following reasons:

1. BECAUSE I do not find the least mention of such a coin in any of our Historians.

2. BECAUSE I cannot suppose that Henry would have wantonly increased the murmurs and complaints of his people, by permitting his son to coin money as king of Sicily, and allow

[*u*] This piece hath been exhibited at the Society of Antiquaries, and my friend the Reverend Mr. Beauvoir of Canterbury informs me by letter, "that, by a crease on one part of the edge, it seems as if it had been joined together: it doth not ring, but sounds as if hollow."

[*w*] The Reverend Mr. Pegge. See his Dissertation, read before the Society, May 20, 1773.

the same to be current in this kingdom. Such a step would have produced no other effect, than that of rendering him more odious to his subjects.

3. BECAUSE there would be an obvious impropriety in imagining that such pieces could be struck for the payment of the annuity or fee farm to the Pope; that rent charge by the stipulation abovementioned being two thousand ounces of pure gold or bullion without allay. So that the expence of coining this tribute was unnecessary; especially when it is considered, that the stamping of bullion gives it no additional value in a foreign country.

4. BECAUSE it is not probable that these pieces were struck in England, for the payment of the Pope's army in Sicily, as a piece of Standard gold coin, weighing fourteen pennyweights twenty-two grains, would (in the purchase of necessaries for an army), have been equal to near forty pounds of our present money, and therefore a moment's reflection will evince, that a piece of coin of so great a value would have been intirely useless for such a purpose. And,

5. BECAUSE the Seals of solid gold which I have seen appear to have been struck from the matrixes in the same manner as Coins are now impressed, and the holes through which the strings or labels pass, affixing them to the instruments, seem to have been perforated after the impressions were made upon them.

THEREFORE, in whatever point of view I consider Mr. Barrett's piece, I cannot suppose it to have been a coin. Upon the whole, I believe Mr. Barrett's piece, either to have been a cast from my Seal; or that it was intended for a Seal which
was.

by the Grant of Sicily to Prince Edmund.

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was never affixed to any instrument, as there are no holes made through it for such purpose. I am with great truth and regard,

Dear Sir,

Your most faithful,

And obedient Servant,

Battersea Rise,
Feb. 19, 1776.

THOMAS ASTLE.



by the Grant of Stills to Prince Edward.
We never afford to any influence, as there are no holes
made through it, and each paper is in with great truth
and regard.

I am Sir,

Yours most faithful,

Wm. Grant

Wm. Grant



AN ACCOUNT
OF THE
TENURES, CUSTOMS, &c.
OF THE MANOR OF
GREAT TAY,
IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX,
IN A LETTER FROM
THOMAS ASTLE, ESQ.
TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE EARL OF LEICESTER.
PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES.



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